

Draft Meeting Notes

VA CAN – The Third Forum
April 14, 2004



Holiday Inn – Koger Center South
1021 Koger Center Boulevard
10800 "Block" of Midlothian Tpk. (Rt.60)
Richmond, VA

Forum III
Making VA CAN Work Better for
You... to Better Meet the Needs of

This document is not intended to be a meeting transcript, per se. It is a summary of key themes and some (though not all) of the dialogue. The meeting summary's structure roughly parallels that of the meeting agenda but is not necessarily true to the temporal order of discussion.

Adam R. Saslow, President of Consensus Solutions, Incorporated, facilitated this meeting of VA CAN.

ATTENDEES

Keith Boisvert
Beverley Donati
Andy Feagans
Mark Heede
Jeff Kohler

Chuck McCarty
Jim McKean
Willie Miles
Stu Neal
Eric Olson

Dyane Pergerson
Richard Rasmussen,
Bill Scruggs
Jennifer Webster

MEETING HANDOUTS

Agenda
Generic Brochure
Mission Statement
Consensus Solutions Information

Directory
Contact List
Evaluation

Worksheet
Code of Conduct
Folder
Chesterfield CD

WELCOMING REMARKS

Richard G. Rasmussen, Director, Small Business Assistance Program
Virginia Dept. of Environmental Quality

Mr. Rasmussen presented an update on VA CAN progress including the development of a VACAN website, a brochure, display panel and a calendar of upcoming events. He showed samples of the web pages and distributed a copy of the generic brochure.

Agenda, Objectives and Format for the Day

Adam R. Saslow, Consensus Solutions, Incorporated

Mr. Saslow reviewed the agenda and goals of today's meeting:

- Re-established and deepened connections within the Network;
- Identified the value of VA CAN to Network Members and to Business / Small Business;
- Agreed upon tactical actions for creating greater value

He also reviewed the meeting worksheets, "Code of Conduct", and other materials found in the meeting package.

From the Trenches: What value is brought by VA CAN?

General Discussion

About the information and resource needs of small business:

- What specifically creates value for the membership of VA CAN?
- How can the group enhance benefits to its own membership?
- What specifically creates value for (small) business?

The table and information below summarizes the discussion.

VALUE	ACCRUES TO	PER INSTANCE OR ALL THE TIME?
Networking - The more we learn from each other , the better we provide assistance. Comfort in assuring closure with other agencies (the follow up call to make sure the other agency has provided the needed service).	VA CAN Participants	Both... though it spikes on a per instance basis and it simmers in between and beyond.
More efficiently facilitate communication to the small business community.	Business Community	Ongoing
Transition from isolated program manager to more of a "relationship manager".	Business Community	
Greater economic efficiency – channel the limited money available to do the same jobs (enhance representation at events) or even more.	Business Community and VA CAN Participants	
Better leverage existing Department networks (e.g., 7 regional DEQ offices, 21 regional SBDC offices).	VA CAN Participants	

VALUE	ACCRUES TO	PER INSTANCE OR ALL THE TIME?
Being the Eyes and Ears for Other Agency's Assistance Programs.	VA CAN Participants	

The group extensively discussed how VA CAN is a network that the members have and can use to share information, develop contacts and coordinate events. Points discussed were:

- **Networking is critical** –Getting to know each VA CAN member (on a personal basis and their area of expertise/assistance) is by far the greatest value.
- **VA CAN is not statewide in geography and culture.** A possible model to reach more businesses around the state is the one that **CMA (?)** uses – e.g. Brown Bag Lunches around the state. This allows businesses to voice their views and learn about available sources of assistance. It reaches more directly to the local level.
- There are **LOTS of resources** available to assist businesses with **LOTS of overlap** and **LOTS of turf issues**.
- **Real value of VA CAN** is as a regional or statewide extension of and at the local events. But how does the VA CAN membership choose and share information about such events? We need someone at VA CAN to establish a calendar of membership activities.
- **Small Business Resource Day** was held last year in Richmond with over 400 business owners attending. The 2nd Small Business Day will be held on May 7th, 2004. Contact Stu Neal at (804) 521-4320 for more information.
- **Business Resource Day in May of 2003 at Radford University.** Although twelve businesses came through the display area, there were over 20 VA CAN members that had displays. The networking and sharing between the members probably proved to be of the greatest value.
- With the **dynamic nature of government**, there will be constant changes in missions, roles, numbers, etc. of assistance providers.
- A **clearinghouse of information** has been created by the Department of Business Assistance to assist businesses. It can be reached at **(866) 248-8814**.

Lunch: Networking and a Luncheon Presentation – A New Tool!

Offered by Stu Neal - Center for Entrepreneurial Development (CED)

Mr. Neal explained that the Center for Entrepreneurial Development (CED) has developed specific CD's for Richmond and the counties of Goochland, Hanover, Henrico and Chesterfield.

He then provided a demonstration of the CD - "A New Interactive Guide to Setting Up a Business in Chesterfield County, VA". This is a sample of the five developed to date. Each CD is sent upon request by a small business to the appropriate Economic Development Office. The CD covers – getting started; operating a business; creating your business plan; and doing business in the specific county/city.

CED is in the process of contracting with other counties, cities and possibly states to develop and modify a CD to their specific needs.

All attendees received a copy of the Chesterfield CD.

Realizing Your Values

Reality Check on the Vision and the Definition of Strategic Goals

General Discussion

Participants discussed:

- Review the Adequacy of the VA CAN Vision
- Identify Areas in Which VA CAN may have Fallen Short
- Identify Measures of Success and Interim Milestones – Beyond the Beans

The members present at the meeting reviewed the existing VA CAN mission and made some interesting observations:

Statewide vs. Regional:

- We are a group of statewide organizations and federal counterparts ... but the ability to provide better assistance is at a more localized level.
- Think like a business... where are our resources best used?
- Don't forget the southwest portion of the state and the Eastern Shore.

The Virginia Comprehensive Assistance Network (VA CAN) is a partnership between representatives of State, Federal, Local and not-for profit agencies. VA CAN participants exist as a closely tied system of service providers, each familiar with the range of federal, state and local assistance programs.

The maintenance and expansion of this system will help change the culture of government service from a program management orientation to one that is more custodial and facilitative – one in which the VA CAN participant acts as a public sector “relationship manager” for the small business owner. In doing so, the “relationship manager” can connect the business owner with a broader range of tools and services.

After a great deal of discussion, they drafted a vision and a new mission statement. ¹

VA CAN VISION

The Virginia Comprehensive Assistance Network (VA CAN) envisions business assistance as a collaborative effort among a range of specialists joining together to leverage skills, resources and knowledge.

Collaborative efforts will result in comprehensive sources of relevant information, contacts and services for businesses throughout the Commonwealth.

¹ Those that attended the meeting, ask that all members review the vision and new mission statement. Please offer your view on the changes by email to Chuck McCarty **by May 15.** [\(\[crmccarty@deq.state.va.us\]\(mailto:crmccarty@deq.state.va.us\)\)](mailto:crmccarty@deq.state.va.us)

VA CAN MISSION

A partnership between representatives of State, Federal, Local and not-for profit organizations, VA CAN's mission is to develop and promote communication that allows for the expansion of the participants' knowledge. VA CAN provides a vehicle for its partners to cooperate and leverage their individual resources for the benefit of the Commonwealth's business community.

Tactical Action! *General Discussion*

Each participant identified their own concrete "who's" "what's" and "when's" for the coming year and how their own values can be reached independently and collectively.

WHO	WHAT	HOW IS SUCCESS MEASURED	BY WHEN
Richard Rasmussen	Maintain the Calendar for ALL VA CAN participants – all events in all parts of the state.	Constantly updated and populated site.	Data needed on an ongoing basis from all members. Richard to send out a note once the site is live.
Adam Saslow	Revise Mission and Vision Statement	Validate and ratified (negative affirmation) by the extended group.	The draft out in the next couple days to Richard. Richard send to the masses by April 30, 2004 . Final (with Consensus) due by May 15.
Jim McKean	Leadership of VA CAN (along with an exit strategy)		
All	Rustle up other actively engaged members – bring a guest to every meeting from inside one's own agency (depth) or beyond (breadth)	Attendance	Each meeting
Tracy Garland	Highlight the successes of VA CAN partnerships		
Beverley Donoti, Richard R. & Mary Beth Hawn	Provide "resource" presentations at VA CAN meetings	Make the presentations good	Each meeting
Richard R.	Develop and maintain the VA CAN website		Ongoing
Jim McKean	Resources... and fund raising	Develop a financial plan (budget projections); Discuss the mechanics of financial management	For introduction in June
Tracy G.	Increase VA CAN's promotional efforts	An outreach plan ratified	

WHO	WHAT	HOW IS SUCCESS MEASURED	BY WHEN
	with the development of a dedicated outreach plan (be sure to include Economic Development Conference). Tie to the calendar	(negative affirmation) by the extended group.	

Closing Remarks and Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 PM.